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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#) [BU](#)
SUBJECT: TWO PEACEKEEPING BATTALIONS IDENTIFIED FOR KATANGA
PROVINCE

REF: A. KINSHASA 467
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 509

[1](#)1. (SBU) In order to address the security situation in the northern and central Katanga province (reftels), MONUC has identified two battalions for near-term deployment. The first, a contingent of Pakistani peacekeepers, Jordanian medical officers, and 50 military observers currently assigned to the ONUB mission in Burundi, will soon be redeployed as part of ONUB's planned drawdown. The second -- a Belgian-trained Francophone battalion from Benin, promised by UN Undersecretary Guehenno in March (ref A) -- is expected to be deployed by early May.

[1](#)2. (SBU) These new troops will add approximately 1600 peacekeepers to those already on the ground in the DRC -- and they will be deployed in an area roughly the size of Texas. Their mission is likely to be difficult, as the primary challenges in Katanga are to simultaneously control Mai-Mai groups (including the fighters who follow the infamous Mai-Mai leader Gedeon) and to support poorly-trained and poorly-disciplined FARDC troops in remote and difficult terrain. Nonetheless, these new troops are a visible commitment of resources to a region whose people are exhausted by conflict (ref B). Northern Katanga is likely to present significant logistical challenges during the elections, and an effective peacekeeping presence will hopefully lead to a significantly higher rate of participation than previously anticipated.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: Though MONUC had requested a full brigade in 2005 to focus exclusively on Katanga, it is hoped that the two battalions can provide enough support to control the ongoing conflicts in northern Katanga and help provide security for peaceful elections in the province. End comment.
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